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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to understand differences and commonalities in international feminism, a typology is presented and discussed. The study deals with feminist theory in the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States. The typology is based on the concept of difference. Two groups are used in the classification scheme: maximizers, those who believe that the differences between men and women are radical and should be emphasized and celebrated; and minimizers, those who would minimize the differences separating men and women and are concerned with integration. A spectrum of attitudes (both historical and contemporary) for each group, on the basis of their position on sex/gender difference and the ultimate goal each advocates for society is then examined. Connecting links between these two groups are discussed. One example of a link is the contemporary black and Third World feminism which mediates between the struggle for socialist revolution (minimizers) and the specificity of the positive values and characteristics of women of color (maximizers). (RM)

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ANATOMY OF DIFFERENCE:

TOWARD A CLASSIFICATION OF FEMINIST THEORY

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I. Introduction

The present European-American feminist dialogue is often limited, partly because of language, partly because of a kind of native American chauvinism, and partly because the cultural traditions and background essential to a good understanding and very subtle and hard to translate. At the same time Americans are all too prone to assume that there are no essential differences (or that the feminist debate in Europe will be "just like" what goes on in the U.S.). As Renate Duelli-Klein noted in a recent review, "We need translators: feminists who because of lived experiences in different contexts and different feminisms are able to make accessible our thinking and feeling and the context in which we act, live, and theorize to each other."*

In working through European feminist theory I sought for a way of ordering the disparate variety of material that is there. Inevitably in order to come to terms with European feminism I brought American feminist thought into play as a basis of comparison and was then drawn to the strategy of typological analysis. A scheme began to suggest itself from looking at both European and American thought. I began to be totally dissatisfied with any schema which made artificial national distinctions, coming to believe that all the positions are represented in all the cultures that I looked at. Each has differing emphases, to be sure, but the tendencies are there, in West Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, and in the U.S. as well.

My original intention was to discuss "trends and tendencies in European feminist theory"; I will be offering instead a new typology of feminist theory

*Renate Duelli-Klein, "Report on Feminism in France Presentation," Women's Research and Resources Centre Newsletter (London), No. 2 (1983), p. 2.

based on the concept of difference. I should make crystal clear that I am dealing only with the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, and the U.S. in this study. I did not visit feminists in southern Europe nor in Scandinavia, and although I have some materials from those cultures, I have not incorporated them specifically into my classification. I would be grateful if others could point me to relevant materials and show where various theorists would fit (or would not fit) into my scheme. Finally, I want to emphasize that this is a work in progress: a typology covers a great deal of material, and each position--embracing variations we should be aware of--runs the risk of oversimplifying a complexity. Critical dialogue is essential and I welcome it.

II. Classifying Feminist Theories: A Review/Critique of the Literature

Ever since the beginning of the second wave of feminism in the mid-sixties, women have been determined not only to resurrect our history, but also to document and save our contemporary experience, so that "never again" will we be faced with the numbing effects of a silent and monolithic past. Thus, the New York Redstockings Collective began the "Notes from the _____ Year" series in 1969, a practice taken up by the British movement with its Feminist Practice: Notes from the 10th Year (19[illegible]). All along there have been attempts to name and sort out the different theoretical perspectives emerging from the wide spectrum of feminist groupings. In her What Women Want: The Ideas of the Movement (1975), Gayle Graham Yates provided an early schema of this kind.[1] She divided women's movement ideologies into three groups, on the basis of their attitude toward men: 1)The feminists regard women as equal to men; 2) the women's liberationists separate from men or at least arrive at their principles "over-against" men; 3) the androgynists would say that women and men should be equal to each other. In each case, Yates carefully delineates the source of the standard, the identification of the enemy, techniques for change, strategy, and goals. On goals, for instance, feminist ideology opts for "integration (collapse of diversity into unity)"; women's liberationist position demands "segregation (diversity at expense of unity)"; and androgyny ideology advocates "pluralism (diversity within unity)."[2] Yates' explanation and classification is clear and helpful for American feminists, but its use of the term "feminist" for only the reform or equal rights groups is

misleading. She does not, of course, attempt to explicate European feminism, and the categories she uses are not totally transportable.

In the same year (1975) Barbara Deckard published her The Women's Movement which includes a chapter on "Theories of Women's Liberation." Deckard identifies three major thrusts of the new women's movement, and these have by now become the standard way of looking at the differences within the movement -- socialist feminism, radical feminism, and women's rights feminism. In her description she explains sensitively the distinctions, and she takes pains not to make artificially precise a split between the socialist feminists and the radical feminists. She quite clearly understands that even for radical feminists, socialist revolution is necessary, yet because of the terminology that she and others adopt, many are led to believe that radical feminists are not socialists. Both groups "agree that to free women a revolution that is both socialist and feminist is necessary; but, differing in their prior analysis, they place differing emphases on the two elements."[3] The ideal society for the two groups, she says, is very similar; a society in which sex roles would be destroyed, and in which "creativity, independence, nurturance and sensitivy" would come to be dominant traits for all human beings.[4] The greatest difficulty with Deckard's analysis is her slighting of that strand of feminism which rejects androgyny and looks to exalt the female and "feminine" characteristics; Deckard passes off this part of feminism by saying "a few women" have these beliefs. By now of course we witness all sorts of groups which seek to "make much of" sex/gender differences -- matriarchy groups, self-help groups, women's communes, women's health care and motherhood groups, women artists, lesbian separatists, witch covens, etc. Neither in this country nor in Europe are these only "a few women."

Deckard's explanations are, however, helpful, and her chronology and documentation of the second wave of American feminism (chapter 12) is invaluable.

Gerda Lerner has recently divided tne new American feminism into five groups: Women's Rights Feminism, Socialist Feminism, Radical Feminism, Lesbian Feminism (to include separatist and non-separtist), and Third World and Black Feminism. The classification is based on the varying beliefs about the cause of women's oppression, the practice of feminism, the goal of feminism, and the nature of woman.[5] Her scheme is not meant to be limiting, and she notes that there are many overlaps and changes over time. By its language, however, it still suggests a larger division between socialist feminists and radical feminists than I believe is there. Further, the system has not been refined by an encounter with the rich variety of non-American examples. (Lerner has said at other times that perhaps the attitude toward equality is the most important factor for getting at differences among feminists.[6])

The most precise and intriguing categorization that I have found is Amanda Sebestyen's large grid-chart accompanying her article, "Tendencies in the Movement: Then and Now" which appeared in England in 1979.[7] The article explicates the chart and imparts a personal history of radical feminism in England; it also displays Sebestyen's awareness that such analytic devices will not always work, that people change and/or assume hyphenate positions that partially invalidate her categorial system. No matter, she observes, "while one group might differ violently from another over a question like, 'Are men the enemy?' they might be in total agreement on 'Do we need a delegate structure?' This ought to make for very creative ways of approaching problems."[8]

Sebestyen's chart lists 13 (thirteen) separate tendencies or positions. Seven groups (ranging from Equal Rights and traditional Marxist through Humanist and Wages-for-Housework) are listed under "Politicos--'The System's the Problem' (Socialist Feminists)". Under "Feminists--'Men are the Problem' (Radical Feminists)" she distributes 6 positions (Feministes Revolutionnaries, Redstockings, Firestone, Cultural Feminist, Matriarchist, and Female Supremacist). Each tendency is then characterized by answering seven questions: What's wrong? Who benefits?/Who's the enemy? How do we fight? Who will fight with us? How did our oppression originate? What is our political relation to men? Where is one to find us? [show transparency of chart]

Clearly the chart is very useful for analyzing feminisms cross-culturally; as well as for Britain, it nicely applies to Germany and France. The problems with it are evident even to Sebestyen. The chart should be made to read right-to-left so that the position closest to the status quo is on the right while the one which claims most power for women is on the left. The schema also used the dichotomy socialist-feminist/radical-feminist, even though such a dichotomy assumes that radical feminists are not socialist. And these labels are themselves breaking down, as Sebestyen herself shows in an analysis of the position of the women who write for Scarlet Woman, a socialist feminist publication:

"They think sexual struggle is the basis of all struggle, and women's oppression is based in male fear of our reproductive powers, whereas I think there are a lot of different struggles, and that women's oppression is based on the work men force us to do for them. But I call myself a radical feminist and they call themselves socialist feminists. So what is going on?"[9] Therefore, such a chart, while very suggestive, allows

important problems to reside in its very structure; further, it refuses to surrender those very categories that Sebestyen says are no longer useful. Indeed, it continues to employ them.

Hence, we need a new conceptualizing tool, one which will allow for a more open-endedness, for change and fluidity over time, one that suggests overlaps and connections between the groups, and that allows us to see the whole range of possibilities more clearly. Sebestyen's scheme is excessively mechanical, causing too much jumping around from box to box. (I must admit, though, that I am very drawn to such a categorization as Sebestyen has done here, and I think this piece of work deserves a wider audience and discussion tha it has gotten in this out-of-print pamphlet which enjoyed only limited circulation in Britain. As Se estyen so rightly says, "if we understood the ...labels better ... debate could become less sectarian but still reach to the heart of the matter."[10])

III. Difference

I have come to believe that the best way of sorting out the varieties of feminist theory (both European and American) is through the concept of difference, i.e., what one finally makes of the sex/gender difference. Everyone acknowledges some manner of difference, but the important thing is how one chooses to answer the complex of question that are entitled: What is the nature of difference, where does it come from, can it be changed, should it be changed? Is difference "merely" biological, with various social overlays that are the thing needing changing? Or is difference both biological and social? What part can be changed? Should any part be changed?

The subject of difference has of course been a crucial one historically in feminism, and most nineteenth and early twentieth-century feminists could be appraised on the basis of whether they thought women should make much or little of their sex. Many thinkers seem to vacillate on the question, so that it is hard to discern the position (and the particular writer may not have come to a conclusion herself). In Virginia Woolf's A Room of One's Own, for example, she speaks of women's writing, female forms, female sentence structure, etc. ("It would be a thousand pities if women wrote like men, or lived like men, or looked like men, for if two sexes are quite inadequate, considering the vastness and variety of the world, how should we manage with one only? Ought not education to bring out and fortify the

differences rather than the similarities? (p. 9 . A Room)." On the other hand, Woolf seems to suggest that the ideal is the androgynous creative mind--"man-womanly," or "woman-manly." The nineteenth-century separates spheres advocates (like Catherine Beecher and Frances Willard) could be called "maximizers." With their strong views on what is right and proper for each sex, with their insistance that the female sphere be honored and glorified-they tend to maximize the differences separating men and women. By contrast, egalitarians like John Stuart Mill would minimize sexual difference and opt for striking down barriers that keep half the human race from contributing to the public sphere--for the whole of humanity is then deprived of the good that half could do (not, however, that this "good" would be in any way different from the "good" that the male half of humanity could do).

A recent issue of Ms. (December 1982) has two theoretical articles, and they show these two fundamental positions quite clearly. In her article "The Power to Name," Elizabeth Janeway asserts that "our rights" are "of grave significance to the rest of the human race," and disagrees with those who would polarize and separate the identity of all into two distinct sexes.[11] She is, thus, a pure case of the minimizer. These arguments come directly from the 19th-century egalitarian tradition--from Wollstonecraft through the Seneca Falls Declaration, John Stuart Mill, and Susan B. Anthony's Constitutional argument based on justice. The other article, " A Quantum Leap in Feminist Theory" by Robin Morgan, falls into the other camp, that

of the maximizers--those who believe that the differences between men and women are radical (i.e., at the root of) and, ultimately, should be emphasized and celebrated. For Robin Morgan, only by accentuating difference can women save the world, (or, rather, will save it).[12] Kate Stimpson, in a 1981 lecture, "Women as Knowers," referred to the "new maximalists" and minimalists in feminism,[13] suggesting to me the idea for the two groups I am using here, the maximizers and the minimizers.

If we can now envision a spectrum of attitudes for each group, on the basis of their position on sex/gender difference and the ultimate goal each advocates for society, we may be able to counteract the static tendency of a grid system such as Sebestyen uses, be able to include historical positions as well as contemporary ones, and get away from the false dichotomy of socialist feminist/radical feminist that I see as no longer useful. Here, then, are the two continua generated ~~from~~ the question of what to make of sex/gender difference. The minimizers: those concerned to integrate. The maximizers: those concerned to differentiate. I picture them both on the same sheet as a way of getting at their similarities as well as their obvious differences. [Show second transparency, this one without any detail but the poles.] Both continua move from the more conservative to the more radical position, i.e., from that position which makes the fewest changes in the status quo to the one in which the whole society is totally transformed by the change in women's status and conceptualization.

The most conservative position here is that view of women which offers a rationale for the present structure, and the most radical is a call for a future society totally transformed either by the extreme of making male and female physiologically no longer different (by the abolition of the female reproductive capacities) or, for the maximizers, by the extreme of separating the two sexes--physically, geographically, socially, sexually--totally. Beyond the conservative end, one could find even more conservative or reactionary positions: for the maximizers, the various sociobiologist positions; for the minimizers, the positions that don't even recognize that "human rights" may be an issue, the position that in effect assumes "we are all alike; we are all white privileged males; we all have equal rights," but never examines its assumptions. It is the position of most of the writers of the Western "liberal" tradition--Kant and Locke, the writers of the American Constitution and the French Enlightenment.

A. The Minimizer Continuum: Details

If we try to situate along the "minimizers" continuum the various positions, we move from the "human rights" position to "women's rights," the position of various reformist groups and theorists, those advocating the granting of equal rights to women in all areas, working within and through the existing political system. This is the 19th-century egalitarian position, and it is found again in the United States National Organization for Women, Gisèle Halimi and the French group Choisir, the

Dutch Man-Vrouw-Maatschappij (Men-Women-Society), and in Germany in Alice Schwarzer and the magazine Emma.

Next along the continuum are various types of socialist feminists, those that advocate a more doctrinaire position on women (socialist revolution must come first), those who advocate wages for housework and other solutions to equate domestic labor with productive labor, and others who attempt to make new syntheses of feminist questions and Marxist answers. In this latter category we might put Sheila Rowbotham; Juliet Mitchell with her four interlocking female structures (production, reproduction of children, sexuality, and socialization of children); French sociologist, Christine Delphy, who asserts the existence of two co-existing modes of production--"the industrial mode within which capital exploits wage labour and the family mode within which men exploit women"[14] ~~and~~ Zillah Eisenstein with her grid pattern for understanding sex and class in concert[15] and German Ulrike Prokop.[16]

Many other positions would begin with a material analysis of the oppression of women, so the socialist feminist position here should not be taken as all-inclusive. Especially in Europe, [as I mentioned earlier], almost all feminists begin with a leftist socialist class analysis of some sort, and then go on from there to whatever position--psychoanalytic, materialism, biological determinism, maternalist, matriarchist, or whatever. What unites all the feminists placed here is their ultimate goal--the minimizing (but not the abolition) of the sex/gender difference between male and female. Most would of course say that the goal is an ideal to be sought for; nevertheless that conception of

human beings colors the analysis of the present situation. Rosalind Coward, a British theorist, sums up the argument for the various socialist feminist positions which tend to minimize sex/gender differences: "[Socialist feminism] is an argument that insists that the issues raised by considering what are 'men' and 'women,' what do their relationships do to each other, how do those relationships get inscribed and reinforced in various institutions and practices, may well be the way to learning about how to think about needs in general."

The next position on the minimizers continuum is one which advocates sharing of traditional gender characteristics, as a way out of the present situation. At the turn of the century, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in both Herland and Women and Economics, was suggesting that the traditional masculine (and valued) characteristics had been mistakenly monopolized by (in the present androcentric phase of history) by both sexes one sex, while the "feminine" virtues needed to be shared in order to create a more humane world.

Both Nancy Chodorow's and Dorothy Dinnerstein's conclusions constitute different delineations of this position. In order to remedy the psychosocial tyranny that oppresses both males and females, exclusive female parenting which produces mothers (as well as the fear and hatred of women) must be ended. Gender characteristics should be shared; sexual characteristics need not be eliminated.[18] Chodorow is very clear that although she describes difference, the gender phenomenon is merely a cultural product. She asserts, "Feminist theories and feminist inquiry based on the notion of essential difference, or focused on demonstrating difference, are doing feminism a disservice."[19]

After those who believe that gender differences should be shared, we find the position of those who want to abolish gender distinctions completely, creating a gender-free (not a sexless) society. The clearest theoretician of this position is Gayle Rubin in her "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex."[20] Rubin calls for "a revolution in kinship" with equality of parenting by both sexes, a heterosexuality that is no longer obligatory, and a re-organization of the sex-property system. Her analysis combines Marx, Lévi-Strauss, Freud, and Lacan but is clearly a demand for the minimizing of sex-gender differences. Male and female are more similar to each other than either is to anything else: "exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities."[21]

Simone de Beauvoir's position on difference is somewhat difficult to decipher because she takes so much space delineating the "Otherness" that is Woman, thus suggesting that her position is one of the maximizers. Still, for de Beauvoir, "one is not born, one rather becomes a woman,"[22] and her goal is for women to become the independent "transcendent" human beings that men have always had the choice to become. In different ways than Rubin, Simone de Beauvoir wants to abolish gender; as she says in her conclusion, women may or may not have different "ideational worlds" than men, but we don't know yet.

German feminist Marielouise Janssen-Jurreit, in her book Sexism, takes a total dialectical approach in analyzing the endless struggle against sexism; criticizing Firestone and others, she avers that the desexualization of procreation and birth through technology will not eradicate sexism. Such an attempt at "destruction of difference" will

simply engender new sexist practices. She calls for a "biology of justice" but claims that those who see technology as the savior are those who have "a teleological perception of the world that is founded in a lack of contradiction in life, attainable only in death."[23] Janssen-Jurreit's vision is, nonetheless, founded on a view of the abolition of sex-roles, as her example of Ursula LeGuin's androgynous society in The Left Hand of Darkness shows.

The extreme pole of the minimizer position is represented by those thinkers who not only want to abolish gender and sex roles but want to abolish sexual difference altogether. Thus Shulamith Firestone wants to abolish conception, pregnancy, and birth (though, she says, not sex). German Marxist Ernest Borneman says in his book Patriarchy that there can be no equality of the sexes until menstruation, pregnancy and "the vulnerability of the mammary glands" are eliminated. "The classless society of the future must also be a sexless society."[24]

Monique Wittig, whose various works fit into different places on this continuum, in a recently translated piece in Feminist Issues, asserts that "the category of sex" must be destroyed "if we want to start to exist." While she is speaking of sex/gender as a sociological reality, she is also speaking of the physiological aspects of sex. All the manifestations of sex are tyrannical for women, "for only they cannot be conceived of outside of it."[25] Wittig asserts that "not even women" would "dream of abolishing" the "declaration of sex." "I say: it is about time to do so." Thus the minimizers, from human rights to the sexless society.

B. The Maximizer Continuum: Details

Turning to the maximizer spectrum, we note first the historical separate spheres position of the 19th and early 20th-century, the view of such disparate thinkers as Catherine Beecher, Frances Willard, and Jane Addams. All believed, though, that women had specific virtues, specific roles, specific aptitudes, and that it was these that made it important for women to have a larger role in society. The new maximizers, by contrast, believe that, in Kate Stimpson's words, "we must release rather than repress the female; honor rather than sentimentalize and dishonor the maternal; applaud women's rich, special sexuality rather than mourn the lack of a phallus."[26]

There are several different groups advocating these ideas, groups who otherwise have little in common. On this continuum, it is not always possible to place these groups in positions to the left or right of each other and the extremist poles. Instead I will group them somewhere in the middle with no bias as to which is more conservative or more radical. All are concerned to recognize and accentuate sex/gender difference as both the means and the goal of feminism.

The first group wants to seek out, resurrect, and valorize the "feminine" wherever it may be found, often in male contexts. The French writers who work with l'écriture féminine, Hélène Cixous being the most well-known, are premier examples. But the British journal m/f and their writers (especially psychologist Parveen Adams) also assert this view. Most will say they are opposed to binary oppositions such as male/female, and that they are concerned simply to assert multiple modes

of difference. In practice, though, the oppositions creep back in, and the valorization of the feminine (or "neo-femininity," as their French opponents call it) subtly becomes the mirror image of the valorization of the masculine.

Luce Irigaray, a psychoanalyst associated with the French psych et po group, also valorizes the feminine, but uses the female body as her territory ("Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un")[27] [This sex which is not one], asserting both the uniqueness and the self-sufficiency of femaleness.

A second important group of maximizers are the "cultural feminists," who do not often theorize but instead have built a strong subculture in England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the U.S., a dense network of women's bookstores, cafes, theatre groups, galleries, holiday centers, communes. Artists such as Judy Chicago and Lucy Lippard have fostered this development with their work and discussions about the specificity of female imagery. Many of these women are separatists; many believe in a former golden age of matriarchy ~~to~~ which they are trying to ~~return~~ reassert.

A third group could be called the maternalists, who specifically celebrate (instead of bemoaning or belittling) the fact and heritage of motherhood as the specific source of woman's different values and, ultimately, her superiority. Leadership in maternalist theory has come from the Americans, and could be said to begin with Elizabeth Cady Stanton's cogent pieces on the subject.[28] In the new feminism, Adrienne Rich's influential Of Woman Born and Alice Rossi's very different perspective in her Daedelus article, are essential works here.[29] In Europe we have Julia Kristeva's "The Maternal Body,"[30] and the whole of

the natural childbirth and women's health care movements are connected to the maternalist position. A writer like the British Sheila Kitzinger has been very influential (though more in the U.S. and Britain than in France and Germany). In the Netherlands one finds the strong Conscious Unmarried Mothers group, which has publications and small groups in many Dutch cities. Groups organizing for lesbian parenting rights are important here too.

The fourth main position on the maximizers continuum I call, after historian Mary Beard, the "Woman as Force" position. The group again encompasses various stances, but all would see women's specificity as positive force both in the past and the present. Mary Beard's Woman as Force in History (1946), makes the historical argument, and we now have a whole group of women historians, mostly American, who take this position. The extension of this line of thought is the "women can save the world" argument, and such feminists as Robin Morgan (Anatomy of Freedom [1982]) and Susan Griffin argue that because of women's historical, biological, mythological, and psychological close connection to a unified Nature, they can now save humanity from the destructive path that ~~that~~ men have blazed. Both patriarchal religion and patriarchal social systems are intimately connected to the rape of the environment and nuclear warfare. These thinkers could be said to be a part of a whole sub-group of "eco-feminists"--the term was coined by French Françoise d'Eaubonne in her Le Féminisme ou la mort (Feminism or Death).[31]

The ~~separatist~~ female supremacists occupy the most radical position on the maximizer continuum. Either lesbian or celibate, these most extreme of the separatists advocate a complete partition of the sexes,

believing that only with their own institutions can women find freedom. How far separatism is taken depends on the individual, but some advocates call for separate geographical areas for women and attempt self-sufficiency in various communal living situations. Most influential here are Mary Daly, especially Gyn/Ecology, Monique Wittig's Les Guérillères, and various science fiction proposals such as Joanna Russ's The Female Man. In Germany the separatists are very strong, and are represented in the vital separatist sub-culture, and in alternatives to the educational institutions such as the FFBIZ (Women's Research, Education, and Information Center) formed by a group of women who believe that Women's Studies cannot be practiced within the university system as it will inevitably be coopted by the patriarchal establishment. In France the Questions Féministes collective split two years ago over the separatist issue.

C. Connecting Links

Are there any connections between these two tendencies in contemporary and historical feminism? Yes, many. Some theorists change their position over time, others seem to provide some links between the two spectra. I see at least four or five links or possible unifiers. One is the suggestive and fertile link of contemporary black and third world feminism which mediates between the struggle for socialist revolution (minimizers) and the specificity of the positive values and characteristics of women of color (maximizers).[32]

Historically, there seems to be a link in the thought of Virginia Woolf, who on the one hand calls for the creativity of the androgynous mind and on the other opts for the values of "poverty, chastity, derision, and freedom from unreal loyalties"[33] that women as women have always had, these values being a means of saving the world from war.

Historian Gerda Lerner's conceptualization of "women as majority" owes much to Mary Beard's "Woman As Force" and in that sense she is a maximizer: women are different from men, organize differently, have different institutions, different values, different cultures--and we should map and celebrate that difference. In other ways Lerner is a minimizer: she is very sure that women are not superior as a group to men: women too can be evil. Like Gayle Rubin, Lerner believes that the establishment of the sex/gender system with institutions of control for both sexes but which particularly disadvantage the female, was prior to any other system of social control. "Sexual control over men and women is an essential and primary means of enforcing societal control and establishing hierarchy," says Lerner.[34] This kind of control evolved in primitive societies long before the establishment of class. Thus the goal of feminism should be to abolish the sex/gender cultural system. Lerner's thought mediates and links the two positions, as she speaks of women working by means of process rather than for a dualistic, dialectical change. Various groups of women must mobilize their own self-interest at their own pace and add it to the analysis and self-interest of others (including men) in various struggles. No separatist, cultural feminist, or androgynist, she would advocate neither a complete maximizer nor

a complete
minimizer position.

Likewise Elizabeth Minnich's suggestions about transforming the academy (not only to include the new scholarship about women, but also to re-vision the value system using traditional female values to, e.g., "humanize" the humanities) can be applied to society as a whole and suggest a link between the two positions.[35]

Perhaps, though, it is French literary critic and analyst Julia Kristeva who is the most suggestive. Eschewing all binary oppositions and essentialist definitions for woman (in places she simply says, "woman cannot be defined"), she opts for a validation of both positions at the same time. Says Jane Gallop in her analysis of Kristeva, "Double discourse is always necessary: assert and then question. Who is capable of such duplicity? 'Perhaps a woman' [answers Kristeva]."[36] Polylogue is Kristeva's reading of husband Philippe Sollers's novel H. At the beginning there is Kristeva's theoretical analysis; at the end three pages are quoted from H. The central portion, however, contains the two discourses together, marked by quotation marks around the parts quoted from Sollers. The passage speaks of a "new love," a heterosexual marriage that would preserve difference in unity, would not be merely "a fusion of two into one."[37] Not abolishing sex or gender, not glorifying the female to the exclusion of the male: if Kristeva can maintain the doubleness, she does provide a kind of link.

V. Conclusion: Where do we go from here?

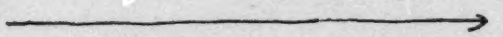
The new maximizers among feminists--whether they valorize the

feminine or the maternal, believe women can save the world or can create their own culture--run the risk of leading either to an extreme rightists' view of separate spheres (à la Phyllis Schlafly) or to a doctrinaire "fascist" separatism. The maximizer position can also lead to a refusal of anything associated with male, masculinist, dualistic thinking--ultimately it can lead to a rejection of theory and of language itself.

The extreme minimizers (like Firestone), on the other hand, ultimately refuse to recognize any of the contributions of women, any of the positive aspects of difference. Others, who opt for a kind of androgyny may ironically end up with a kind of Jan Morris, transsexual view: with sex change operations and hormonal therapies possible, all may choose their own sex. Sex/gender difference may become merely the occasion for exalting of certain qualities. The equal rights pole of the minimizers takes no account of the female or the problems of the system itself, merely makes more "men" out of women by adding them to an already pernicious system.

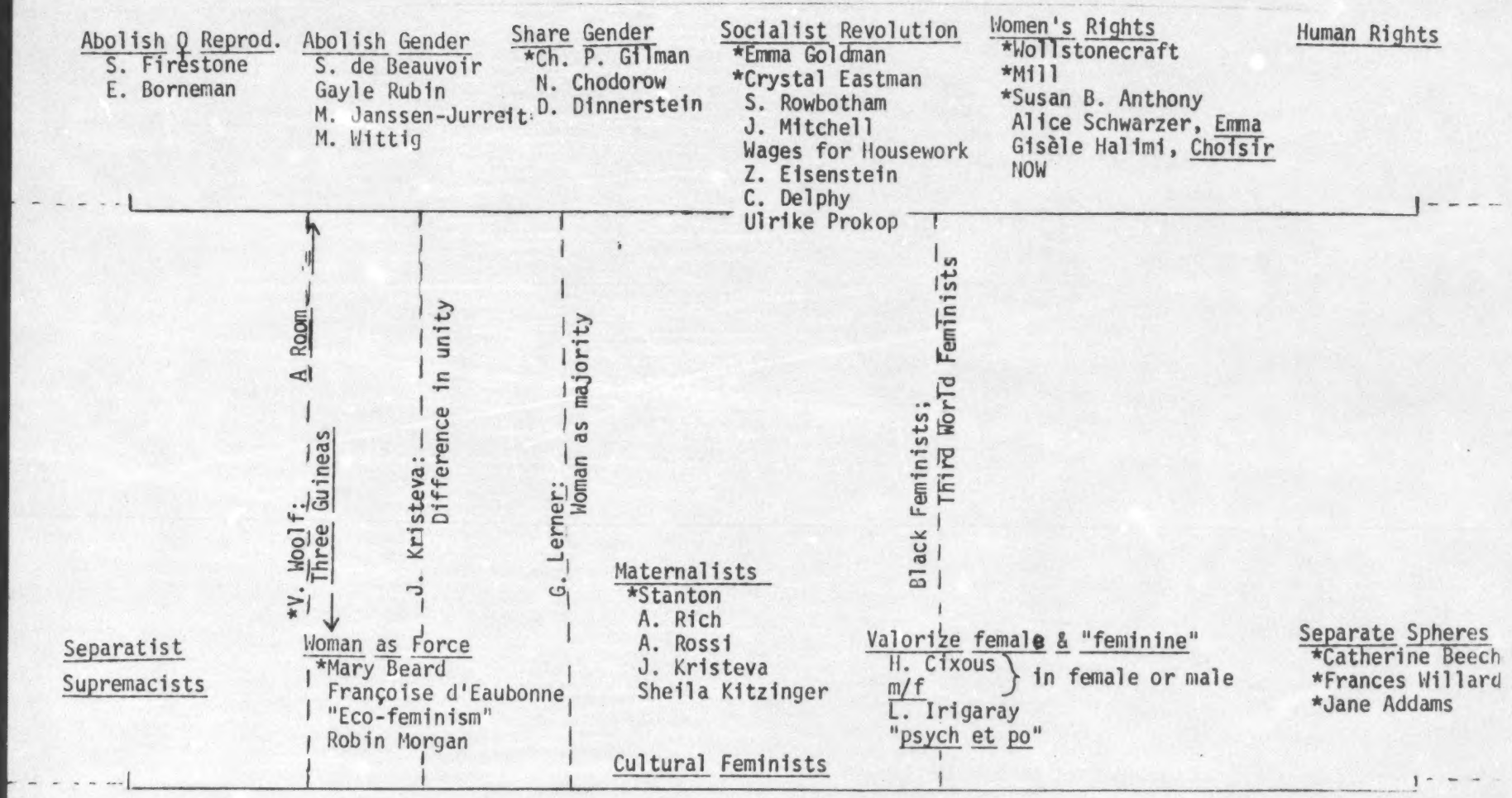
Perhaps what we should be striving for is a validation of plurality--both within the female sex and of gender-characteristics between sexes, so that the goal is the valuing of the contribution of each group.

I am not completely satisfied with a conceptualization of theories that uses linear continua: connections between the two positions are hard to envision, and the continuum suggests a linear "progression" which does violence to the ideas. Each position embraces variations we should be aware of; a typology oversimplifies as it attempts to understand. Although I do not want to push this nor shove and tug my categories to fit, it occurred to me that the double helix of the DNA molecule might be


more suggestive than a two-dimensional linear continuum. It is three-dimensional, the double spiral fitting together by means of several links between the two strands; it is constantly moving; it is not static; it is more symbolically feminine with its curved rather than straight lines. Generally a spiral suggests an historical approach, with a belief in the need to look back and go forward at the same time. Certainly the main tenets of both the maximizer and the minimizer positions have been used before, and the nineteenth-century delineations of the positions are useful even as the twentieth-century theorists go beyond them. At any rate, the double helix--dedicated to Rosalind Franklin-- can be suggestive and useful to our conceptual imaginations as we try to understand differences and commonalities in international feminism.

MINIMIZERS:

Concerned to Integrate



MAXIMIZERS:

Concerned to Differentiate

MORE RADICAL (transforming)

MORE CONSERVATIVE (social stasis)

* Historical position

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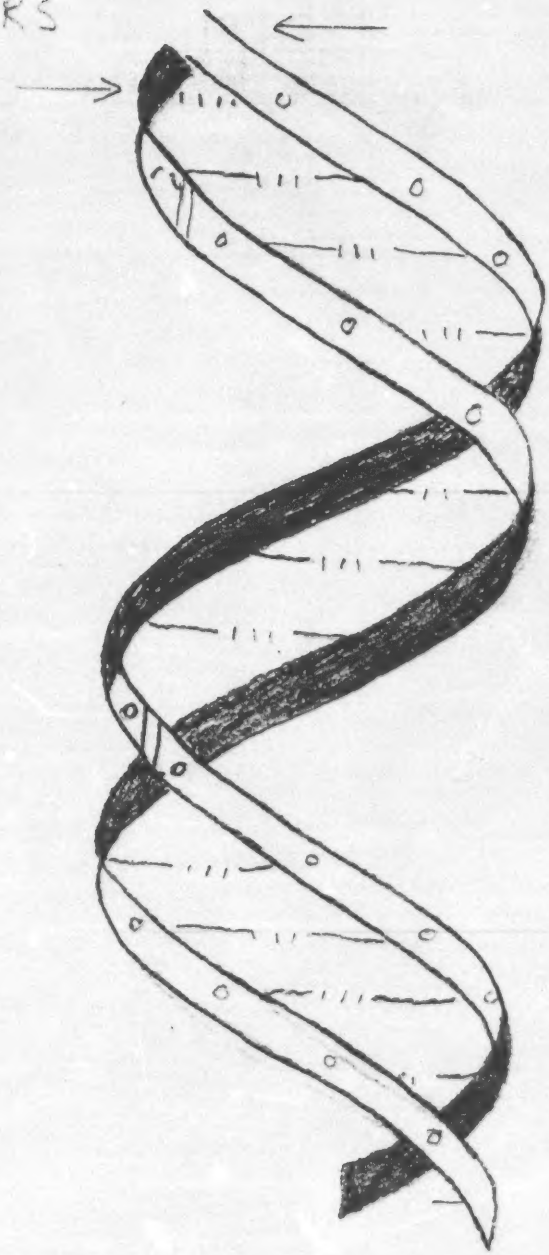
MAXIMIZERS

MINIMIZERS



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